

**Summary of the
Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board Meeting
April 20, 1999**

The Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board (ELAB) met on Tuesday, April 20, 1999 at 2:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST) by teleconference. The meeting was led by Co-Chair, Dr. Wilson Hershey, using the agenda distributed to the board members. A list of Action Items is given in Attachment A. Participants are found in Attachment B, while an agenda is contained in Attachment C. Attachment D contains a status listing of ELAB recommendations.

Introduction

Following role call, Ms. Elizabeth Dutrow, the Designated Federal Officer (DFO), reviewed the rules of this meeting as governed by the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) and her role as DFO. Dr. Hershey reviewed the agenda and welcomed the meeting participants. Ms. Dutrow noted that two items would be covered earlier than scheduled in the agenda: EPA's new information office and a revisitation of checklist concerns.

EPA's New Information Office - An Update on Its Status

Ms. Nancy Wentworth reviewed for the participants the status of EPA's new office responsible for managing EPA's information. Ms. Wentworth noted the new office was described in a December 1998 memorandum to EPA employees. The new office has been designed to consolidate information management activities across EPA with four areas of priority including public access to information, system content, data quality, and the electronics/hardware that the Agency will use. The new office will be headed by a National Program Manager. Within the upper tier of its structure, a Quality Staff and Board will be responsible for improving EPA's data and information. On this same level, policy and external liaison (an ombudsman office) components will reside. The Office will house three main divisions addressing information policy and collection, information technology and services, and information analysis and access. Ms. Wentworth stated that the new office positions the data quality function in a good place to have a more positive impact on EPA's data systems and their design.

Review of Recent ELAB Correspondence

Dr. Hershey summarized the recent ELAB correspondences he had prepared for the members. Most were sent to formally transmit ELAB decisions that had been made in previous meetings. Ms. Dutrow read a letter ELAB received April 15, 1999 from Ms. Elaine Stanley, of EPA's Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assistance, on the subject of disengaging Good Laboratory Practice (GLP) laboratories from NELAC.

ELAB Recommendations for On-site Checklists

Mr. Jerry Parr brought to the attention of the ELAB membership that it had never finalized its June 1998 report with recommendations for the use of checklists during a NELAC on-site assessment. Mr. Parr offered to prepare a final report for ELAB approval based on the new reporting format ELAB has adopted. It was agreed that Mr. Parr should revise the report for ELAB review.

ELAB Recommendations

A discussion, led by Dr. Hershey, ensued based on the status and listing of ELAB's recommendations. The listing consists of 41 recommendations. At the outset, the membership agreed to adopt a system of prioritizing recommendations. It was decided that the categories of High, Medium, Inactive and Complete would be used. High priorities would be assigned an ELAB member to monitor progress of the recommendation. That member would also report on the recommendation at the next ELAB meeting on June 30, 1999. Medium priorities will be monitored by ELAB and reviewed periodically. An Inactive assignment may mean that ELAB believes the issue is dealt with under another recommendation or is no longer applicable. Complete refers to those activities that have been addressed or acted upon by either ELAB or another organization.

A summary of the discussion by recommendation number follows.

- Recommendation 1 - Complete; ELAB received a letter from EPA's Elaine Stanley on 4/15/99 addressing this issue. It was decided that ELAB will forward Ms. Stanley's letter to NELAC with copies to the chairs of the GLP workgroup.
- Recommendation 2A - Inactive; NELAC has moved beyond this issue.
- Recommendation 2B - Inactive.
- Recommendation 2C - Complete
- Recommendation 3 - Medium; ELAB would like to hear how this matter turns out.
- Recommendation 4 - High; Sandra Wroblewski and Bill Kavanagh will update on this at the annual meeting.
- Recommendation 5A - High; Jerry Parr to track this.
- Recommendation 5B - High; Jerry Parr to track this.
- Recommendation 5C - Complete
- Recommendation 6 - Inactive; issue is being addressed under Recommendation 39.
- Recommendation 7 - Complete
- Recommendation 8 - Complete
- Recommendation 9A - Inactive
- Recommendation 9B - Complete
- Recommendation 9C - Inactive

Recommendation 10 -	Complete
Recommendation 11 -	Complete
Recommendation 12 -	Complete
Recommendation 13 -	High; Jerry Parr will track this.
Recommendation 14 -	High; Jerry Parr will track this.
Recommendation 15 -	High; Jerry Parr will track this.
Recommendation 16 -	Complete
Recommendation 17 -	Complete
Recommendation 18 -	Complete
Recommendation 19 -	High; Sandra Wroblewski will track this.
Recommendation 20 -	Complete
Recommendation 21 -	Complete
Recommendation 22 -	High; Wilson Hershey will track this.
Recommendation 23 -	High; Wilson Hershey will contact Marge Prevost of the NELAC Accreditation Process Committee to address this.
Recommendation 24 -	Inactive; Recommendation 24 relates to 41 and will addressed there.
Recommendation 25 -	Complete
Recommendation 26 -	Inactive
Recommendation 27 -	A decision was made to break 27 into A and B portions.

27A reads: ELAB recommends that EPA continue the Office of Water streamlining effort as an intermediate step to PBMS.
Medium

27B reads: ELAB recommended that a PBMS subcommittee be formed to develop and offer recommendations during NELAC IV for integrating the development of NELAC and PBMS.

	Complete
Recommendation 28 -	Medium
Recommendation 29 -	High; Wilson Hershey will track this.
Recommendation 30 -	Complete
Recommendation 31 -	High; Sandra Wroblewski and Bill Kavanagh will track this. This matter will be discussed during the ELAB meeting of 4/29/99.
Recommendation 32 -	High; Jerry Parr will track this. Mr. Parr will resubmit a revised report for the meeting of 4/29/99.
Recommendation 33 -	Inactive; this issue is covered in 23.
Recommendation 34 -	Inactive; this issue is covered in 23.
Recommendation 35 -	High; Wilson Hershey will ask Gary Kramer to handle this.
Recommendation 36 -	Inactive; Wilson Hershey will send a letter to the NELAC Membership and Outreach Committee asking them to assist small laboratories by sharing helpful materials found on the websites for the States of Florida and Kansas.

Recommendation 37 -	Inactive
Recommendation 38 -	High; Al Verstuyft will track this.
Recommendation 39 -	High; Kathy Hillig will track this.
Recommendation 40 -	Medium
Recommendation 41 -	High; Al Verstuyft will track this.

This discussion closed with the agreement that all High priority recommendations will be reported upon by the person assigned to track the issue at the June 30, 1999 ELAB meeting in Saratoga Springs, New York.

Ms. Dutrow will organize the full listing of recommendations to reflect assignments and to show the date the recommendations were first made.

ELAB Review of January 6, 1999 Letter to ELAB from Carol Finch, EMMC Staff, EPA

Dr. Hershey introduced the matter of ELAB's review of the letter received from Carol Finch of EPA's EMMC Staff in response to ELAB's original letter of October 23, 1998. ELAB reviewed the responses to the ELAB recommendations. The first discussion involved Recommendation 5A (regarding consistent implementation of PBMS). Mr. David Friedman reported that EPA is trying to obtain consistency among its Programs for PBMS. He noted that an EPA committee is working on this matter.

For the remaining issues addressed in Ms. Finch's letter, it was decided that because the letter commented directly on the ELAB recommendations, only those responses for recommendations for which High priority status had been assigned would be addressed. Each ELAB member assigned to manage a High priority recommendation was directed to report back to Dr. Hershey with a disposition on its response in Ms. Finch's letter.

A comment was received from Lynn Bradley that training in ISO 25 for the State Agriculture Directors will be held in June in San Antonio, Texas in concert with the Association of Food and Drug Officials' annual meeting.

Open Forum Issues

Discussion continued on the items remaining on the list of issues identified at the January 13, 1999 Open Forum.

Those remaining items and their disposition were:

1. NIST oversight of PT providers - Does NIST plan to notify Accrediting Authorities of failed rounds?

Disposition: Ms. Dutrow will speak with Ms. Anne Rhyne of the NELAC Proficiency Testing Committee to determine whether the committee has addressed this matter.

2. NELAC Regulatory Coordination Committee requested clear delineation of these methods and analytes, per Figure 1-3 of the NELAC standards; spreadsheets were offered as assistance.

Disposition: Bill Kavanagh is handling this matter in his workgroup.

4. Consistency of assessments when multiple accrediting authorities and assessors are used

Disposition: While the issue is important, it was felt that ELAB would not pursue the issue because it would be very expensive to accomplish this.

6. NIST role in the PT program with respect to the NELAC PT requirements

Disposition: ELAB felt the issue is not clearly defined for consideration. Further, ELAB is comfortable with the Proficiency Testing Committee's address of proficiency testing matters.

8. Clarification of field laboratories versus laboratory measurements for short holding times

Disposition: This matter has been addressed by ELAB in previous meetings. Recommendations 38 and 41 address the issue and will be monitored as High priorities for ELAB.

9. Harmonization of NELAC standards and EPA's Quality Assurance Division's guidance

Disposition: Further clarification is needed to determine whether ELAB can address this issue. Ms. Dutrow will research the matter further.

12. Confidentiality with respect to the use of State laboratory staff on assessment teams for private laboratories.

Disposition: This issue will be added for discussion on the 4/29/99 meeting agenda.

Meeting Closure

Following a review of action items and assignments, Ms. Dutrow closed the meeting.

Attachment A

**ACTION ITEMS
ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY ADVISORY BOARD (ELAB) MEETING
APRIL 20, 1999**

Item No.	Action Item	Date to be Completed
1.	Ms. Dutrow will send all ELAB members a copy of the E. Stanley letter.	4/21/99
2.	Mr. Parr will revise the checklist report and send it to all ELAB members.	4/26/99
3.	Dr. Hershey will forward E. Stanley's letter to NELAC and copy the chairs of the ELAB GLP workgroup.	4/99
4.	High priority recommendation will be reported on at the 6/30/99 ELAB meeting.	6/30/99
5.	Dr. Hershey will speak to Marge Prevost regarding Recommendation 23.	4/99
6.	Recommendation 31 (3 rd party assessors) will be discussed at the 4/29/99 ELAB meeting by Sandra Wroblewski.	4/29/99
7.	Dr. Hershey will send a letter to the Membership & Outreach Committee asking them to assist small laboratories.	4/99
8.	Ms. Dutrow will reorganize the recommendations listing.	4/28/99
9.	Ms. Dutrow will contact Anne Rhyne on PT matters.	4/27/99
10.	Ms. Dutrow will address QAD matters.	4/99
11.	Confidentiality of State lab assessors for private laboratories will be added to the agenda for 4/29/99.	4/20/99
12.	Members with High priority recommendations will review the responses to their issues in the C. Finch letter and respond with a disposition to W. Hershey.	4/30/99

PARTICIPANTS
ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY ADVISORY BOARD (ELAB) MEETING
APRIL 20, 1999

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Mr. Paul Mills	DynCorp	

Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board (ELAB) Meeting

**April 20, 1999
2:00 p.m. - 5:00 noon EASTERN**

**US EPA
Room 911, West Tower
401 M Street, SW
Washington, DC**

AGENDA

Review of Advisory Committee Meeting Rules	Elizabeth Dutrow, DFO
Welcome, Review of Meeting Agenda	Wilson Hershey, Co-Chair Ramona Trovato, Co-Chair
Brief Revisitation of On-site Concerns	Jerry Parr
Status of ELAB Recommendations	Wilson Hershey, Elizabeth Dutrow
Discussion of C. Finch's (Exec. Dir., EMMC Staff) Letter Responding to ELAB Comments	Wilson Hershey
Open Forum Issues Identified 1/14/99 - continued discussion (see list in minutes from 1/14/99)	Wilson Hershey
Update on EPA's New Information Office - Implications for Quality	Nancy Wentworth
Updates on Ongoing Issues: *Small Laboratories *Sample Shipment *Status of ELAB Recommendations	Wilson Hershey
Action Item Review	Ramona Trovato
Meeting Closure	Elizabeth Dutrow

STATUS OF ELAB RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: The GLP Subcommittee will present a final report and recommendations at the next ELAB meeting in July, 1997.

Action: ELAB completed report. Awaiting response from EPA EMMC Policy Council.

Recommendation 2A: The issue of how to define the basis for NELAC accreditation is of concern to the laboratory community and should continue to be addressed jointly by the NELAC Committees on Proficiency Testing and Program Policy and Structure. ELAB participation in the effort will be the responsibility of Mr. Coyner and Ms. Moore, who are members of the Proficiency Testing and Program Policy and Structure Committees, respectively.

Action: Recommendation remains open. Awaiting action from NELAC PT and PPS committees and ELAB members.

Recommendation 2B: ELAB recommends to EMMC and the NELAC Board of Directors, regarding proficiency testing, that the goal of the NELAC PT program should be to provide full-volume, real-world samples, keeping in mind considerations of practicality and cost.

Action: Recommendation remains open. Awaiting action from NELAC Board and EMMC Policy Council.

Recommendation 2C. ELAB recommends to EMMC and the NELAC Board of Directors, regarding proficiency testing, that the USEPA serve as the oversight body for the PT program, with the necessary resources and commitment to improve the current system. Alternatively, ELAB recommends that the oversight body be another government organization and that steps be taken to ensure a smooth transition.

Action: Completed - NIST to serve as PTOB.

Recommendation 3: ELAB will recommend to the NELAC Board of Directors that the Program Policy and Structure Committee address the issue of how to recognize an appropriate role for Native American Tribal Nations in NELAC.

Action: Recommendation remains open. Awaiting action from NELAC Board and PPS committee.

Recommendation 4: With regard to the role of private-sector accrediting bodies in NELAC, ELAB will recommend to the NELAC Board of Directors that the NELAC national database include publicly available information describing the functions performed by individual private organizations for specific State programs.

Action: Recommendation remains open. Awaiting action from NELAC Board.

Recommendation 5A: ELAB recommends to the EMMC and the NELAC Board of Directors that USEPA's programs and Regions and the States work to implement PBMS consistently.

Action: Recommendation remains open. Awaiting action from NELAC Board and EMMC Policy Council.

Recommendation 5B: ELAB recommends to the EMMC and the NELAC Board of Directors that training in implementation of PBMS is needed for State laboratory inspectors.

Action: Recommendation remains open. Awaiting action from NELAC Board and EMMC PC.

Recommendation 5C: ELAB recommends to the EMMC and the NELAC Board of Directors that a representative from the EMMC Work Group on PBMS work with the ELAB PBMS Subcommittee in the future.

Action: Completed

Recommendation 6: ELAB recommends that EPA prepare a working set of PT sample design criteria which meet Program Office requirements to be used by the Proficiency Testing Oversight Body (PTOB) to include, at a minimum, concentration, interferences, media.

Discussion: NELAC is working with EPA/EMMC to develop specifications for proficiency testing (PT) sample design criteria for use by the Proficiency Testing Oversight Body (PTOB). EPA is also working with NIST to develop a draft of the standard. The draft is currently awaiting response from EPA.

Action: Recommendation remains open. Criteria have been developed for the Water Pollution (WP) and Water Supply (WS) samples. ELAB wishes to reinforce that the recommendation is still important. Awaiting action from EPA Program Offices for criteria other than WP and WS.

Recommendation 7: ELAB recommends that NELAC/NIST/EPA develop a protocol which can be used by the PTOB, through review and analysis of data, to assure program equivalence among PT providers. (See attached paper by Dan Tholen for starting point.) ELAB further recommends that this protocol be finalized as soon as possible to ensure the integrity of this program.

Discussion: The NELAC PT committee has worked with NIST and EPA to produce a draft standard for PTOB to assure equivalence among PT providers. An overview of the draft document, Handbook 150-xx, was given by NIST in the NIST Open Meeting on the morning of January 16, 1998. NIST reviewed Handbook 150-xx and requested public comments by March 15, 1998. Members of the ELAB were impressed with the draft document and the cooperation with NIST and EPA.

Action: Completed. ELAB sent a letter to EPA and NIST complimenting them on their work to date on developing Handbook 150-XX.

Recommendation 8: ELAB recommends to NELAC that the periodic PT studies occur at fixed times throughout the year. ELAB further recommends that initial and remedial PT samples may be obtained outside this schedule.

Discussion: ELAB has formerly recommended to NELAC that periodic PT studies be conducted at fixed times throughout the year. The problems created by labs not being able to receive or reinstate accreditation due to scheduling were discussed. ELAB is concerned about the effect of having only two opportunities per year for obtaining PT samples, will have on the accreditation process, both initial and remedial. ELAB recommends that NELAC ensure that the PT system not delay the laboratory accreditation process by more than thirty days.

Action: Completed. PT standards have been revised to indicate that accrediting authority may set the schedule. Remedial samples may be obtained

Recommendation 9A: ELAB recommends that the long range goal of NELAC be to develop a consistent approach to both scope of accreditation and PT program sample design, which recognizes the needs of the laboratories, the primary accrediting authorities, and the Agency, particularly with regard to performance based methods, similar technologies, and analytical capabilities.

Discussion: The goal to develop a consistent scope of accreditation and PT programs has been endorsed by the NELAC PT Committee. ELAB discussed the need for the scope of accreditation and PT programs to address performance based measurement systems (PBMS), similar technologies, and analytical capabilities. It was suggested since PBMS is still under development by EPA, NELAC should monitor progress in this program but avoid any delays in the implementation of the NELAC PT program.

Action: Recommendation remains open. Awaiting action from NELAC PT and PPS committees.

Recommendation 9B: ELAB recommends that the PTOB, during implementation of the PT program, require that each PT provider record and report PT results to both the accrediting authority and the PTOB on a method basis, by matrix and analyte.

Discussion: NELAC is awaiting EPA specifications for reporting by method, matrix, and analyte. ELAB will recommend that the Proficiency Testing Oversight Body (PTOB) require that each PT provider record and report PT results to both the accrediting authority and to the PTOB to meet the EPA specifications.

Action: Completed. The PT committee's proposed standards for program/matrix/analyte was adopted by NELAC.

Recommendation 9C: ELAB recommends that to NELAC that a task group monitor the impact on implementation of the discrepancy between PT program design and the scope of accreditation.

Discussion: None

Action: Recommendation remains open. Awaiting action from NELAC once program is operational.

Recommendation 10: ELAB recommends that there is consistency between NELAC Standards and the EPA's PT Externalization program.

Discussion: NELAC is working closely with EPA and EMMC to insure that NELAC standards are consistent with EPA's PT externalization program. A PT Committee meeting with EMMC in September indicates close cooperation in developing consistent PT standards.

Action: Completed.

Recommendation 11: ELAB recommends that the proposed PT standards (including the Appendices) be adopted as presented.

Discussion: The recommendation to adopt the proposed PT standards has been accomplished.

Action: Completed

Recommendation 12: ELAB recommends to NELAC that the GLP decisions and the NELAC timeline be decoupled.

ELAB further recommends that the GLP subcommittee report to the ELAB at the Interim Meeting with three options including a) status quo; b) Options 1 + 3 + 5; and c) lab accreditation.

ELAB further recommends that ISO Guide 25 be explicitly considered to understand the value it offers to the GLP process.

ELAB further recommends that the NELAC process be evaluated to identify the value added, if any. EPA will provide language to clarify that the NELAC Constitution and Bylaws reflect that decision-making and implementation of the GLP Program will continue as an exclusively federal program.

The goal of this activity is to provide information to OECA and OPPTS management for a decision regarding the direction of the GLP program.

Discussion: Addressed in the GLP report.

Action: Completed. GLP report has been forwarded to EPA - awaiting response from EMMC Policy Council.

Recommendation 13: ELAB recommends that before EPA promulgates a regulation, it must demonstrate and document that MQOs are achievable using available measurement technology. Recommendations modified to: ELAB recommends that before EPA publishes a method, whether in regulation or guidance, the method must be demonstrated reliable for its stated use.

Discussion: This recommendation was reconsidered and determined to need modification (see above). This issue was brought to the attention of the EPA Acting Deputy Administrator Peter Robertson on March 9, 1999, at which time he agreed to pursue this issue with the EMMC Policy Council.

Action: Recommendation remains open. Awaiting response from Deputy Administrator.

Recommendation 14: ELAB recommends that EPA demonstrate that any new or revised regulatory measurement requirements are achievable on samples that represent the same level of analytical challenge as the matrix for which the regulation is intended, that is, don't publish a regulation without a method that works. (Ideally, this would be samples of the actual matrix to be monitored, as defined by the regulation.)

Discussion: The Board voted to include an additional clarifying phrase to the recommendation.

Action: Recommendation remains open. Awaiting response from EMMC Policy Council.

Recommendation 15: ELAB recommends that EPA consider the following remaining important unresolved issues:

- PB Measurement System vs. PB Method
- Sample matrix
 - Method Validation
 - Method Compliance
 - Interlaboratory Comparability
 - Cost
 - Laboratory Client Relationship

Discussion: None

Action: Recommendation has been superseded by final report of the PBMS Work Group.

Recommendation 16: ELAB recommends to NELAC that the initial approval of accrediting authorities should occur simultaneously.

Discussion: The NELAC Transition Committee has implemented this recommendation.

Action: Completed.

Recommendation 17: ELAB recommends to NELAC that the first round of NELAC accreditation of laboratories by accrediting authorities should also occur simultaneously.

Discussion: The NELAC Transition Committee has implemented this recommendation.

Action: Completed.

Recommendation 18: ELAB recommends to NELAC that prior to the designation of approved proficiency test (PT) sample providers as required by Chapter 2, accredited labs should be allowed to continue using existing PT sample providers. However, in the interim, frequency of PT sample analysis as required by Chapter 2 must be met.

Discussion: The NELAC Transition Committee has implemented this recommendation. The PT committee has modified the PT chapter to accommodate this recommendation.

Action: Completed.

Recommendation 19: ELAB recommends to NELAC that Chapter 6 be further defined regarding Accrediting Authority recognition of States to address the conflict of interest between public and private sector labs, with respect to a State laboratory conducting routine environmental testing analyses. Further definition will include the specific guidance to avoid conflict of interest for an above stated Accrediting Authority.

Discussion: The NELAC Accrediting Authority Committee has implemented this recommendation. At NELAC IV further complaints were raised that the AA committee had not adequately addressed this issue.

Action: Recommendation remains open. Awaiting response from AA committee.

Recommendation 20: ELAB recommends to NELAC that the issue of primacy State laboratories in accrediting non-primacy State laboratories be referred to the Accrediting Authority Committee for further consideration.

Discussion: The NELAC Accrediting Authority Committee has implemented this recommendation.

Action: Completed.

Recommendation 21: ELAB strongly recommends to NELAC a vote for adoption of the Standards with modifications as specified and passed by ELAB motions on July 28, 1997.

Discussion: NELAC adopted the standards.

Action: Completed.

Recommendation 22: ELAB recommends that EPA Program Offices become more active in NELAC and promulgate regulations that are consistent with the NELAC standards as appropriate.

Discussion: Nancy Wentworth, co-chair of the EMMC Panel on Laboratory Accreditation, discussed the steps that are being taken within the Agency to obtain a consensus opinion. In a meeting on March 9, 1999, the EPA Acting Deputy Administrator Peter Robertson agreed to pursue this.

Action: Recommendation remains open. ELAB sent a letter to the EMMC Policy Council Co-Chairs noting that NELAC is awaiting critical input from EPA Program Offices through EMMC. ELAB encourages the Agency to provide that input in writing as soon as possible. Awaiting response from EMMC Policy Council.

Recommendation 23: ELAB recommends to NELAC that as advisory appendix be written that addresses the issue of due process for laboratories. This appendix must address the rights, responsibilities, and obligations of the laboratories and accrediting authorities. The discussion should include, but not be limited to:

- F: the right of the laboratory to see the audit report prior to action;
- S the right of the laboratory to privacy during review;
- S the right of the laboratory to appeal prior to suspension or revocation; and
- S the right of the laboratory to confidentiality.

Action: Recommendation remains open. Awaiting response from AP committee.

Recommendation 24: ELAB strongly recommends to NELAC that, during consideration of inclusion of sampling into NELAC standards, all stakeholders be represented.

Action: Recommendation remains open. Awaiting response from Field Measurements ad hoc committee.

Recommendation 25: ELAB recommends that NELAC invite the Federal Partners Committee to make a report at NELAC IV (June 28, 1998) on their intention to 1) participate in NELAC; b) continue their own programs; and c) to serve as accrediting authorities.

Action: Completed

Recommendation 26: ELAB recommends that EPA report on the Agency's action regarding PBMS and how it relates to the Quality Systems Chapter.

Action: Awaiting response from EMMC Panel on Laboratory Accreditation.

Recommendation 27: ELAB recommends that EPA continue the Office of Water streamlining effort as an intermediate step to PBMS. ELAB further recommended that a PBMS subcommittee be formed to develop and offer recommendations during NELAC IV for integrating the development of NELAC and PBMS.

Discussion: EPA has decided to develop a formal PBMS program for the Office of Water, separate from the OW streamlining. ELAB accepted on December 10, 1998, the report of the PBMS workgroup as a product of ELAB with the incorporation of previous findings and minor editorial changes. It was decided that a formal ELAB report will be sent by ELAB to EPA with an appropriate cover letter introducing the document and its issues. The PBMS working group report has been submitted to EPA's Acting Deputy Administrator Peter Robertson, during a meeting on March 9, 1999, at which time he agreed to address this issue with the EMMC Policy Council.

Action: Recommendation remains open. Awaiting response from EMMC Policy Council.

Recommendation 28: ELAB recommends that the NELAC Program Policy and Structure Committee review the structure of the AARB, consider expanding its charter to include an annual Management Systems Review of NELAP operations by an independent organization, include state members from the accrediting authorities, and address the timing of such reviews.

Action: Recommendation remains open. Awaiting response from PPS committee.

Recommendation 29: ELAB recommends that EPA and the Department of Transportation address the inconsistencies between the EPA preservation requirements and the DOT shipping requirements.

Discussion: ELAB sent a letter to both EPA and DOT requesting prompt resolution to this impasse. In a meeting on January __, 1999, the EMMC Policy Council Co-chair Noreen Noonan agreed to pursue this issue.

Action: Response received from DOT stating that the shipping requirements will not be changed. Awaiting response from EMMC Policy Council.

Recommendation 30: ELAB recommends that the proposed changes to the NELAC standards be adopted in the voting session scheduled for July 2, 1998.

Action: Completed.

Recommendation 31: ELAB recommends that a third-party assessor workgroup be formed to evaluate minimum credentials for third-party assessors, both individuals and organizations. The workgroup will also review NELAC Chapter 6 to determine if the criteria are sufficient for States to evaluate third party assessors and make recommendations for revisions if not.

Discussion: A work group has been formed chaired by Sandra Wroblewski and Bill Kavanagh.

Action: Awaiting product from work group.

Recommendation 32: ELAB recommends that the ELAB Laboratory Assessment workgroup recommendations on checklists be forwarded to the NELAC On-site Assessment Committee for their consideration.

Action: Awaiting response from OA committee.

Recommendation 33: ELAB recommends that the NELAC Accrediting Authority Committee further define and address conflict of interest between public and private sector laboratories.

Action: Awaiting response from AA committee.

Recommendation 34: ELAB recommends that the NELAC Accreditation Process committee develop an advisory appendix that addresses the rights, responsibilities, and obligations of laboratories and accrediting authorities.

Action: Awaiting response from AP committee.

Recommendation 35: ELAB recommends that NELAC reach out to laboratory associations through its web page by providing relevant links and sample standard operating procedures, case histories, sample quality manuals, and work sheets to assist small laboratories.

Action: Recommendation remains open. Awaiting response from Regulatory Coordination committee.

Recommendation 36: ELAB will ensure a flow of information and guidance to the NELAC Committees by submitting significant information on to the NELAC Membership and Outreach Committee,

Action: Recommendation remains open. Awaiting input from ELAB.

Recommendation 37: ELAB recommends that NELAC continue to ensure that the NELAC standards contain only essentials to achieve the desired data quality; and, ELAB will make small laboratory issues a standing agenda item for future ELAB meetings.

Action: Recommendation remains open. Awaiting input from ELAB. ELAB continues to include small laboratory issues on agendas.

Recommendation 38: ELAB recommends to NELAC that the NELAC Accreditation Process and Field Measurements Committees work together to develop a clear definition of critical terms (i.e., field laboratory, mobile laboratory, field measurement, and fixed laboratory) prior to defining the accreditation process for other than fixed laboratories; and, ELAB recommends to NELAC to exclude on-line monitors from its consideration.

Action: Recommendation remains open. Awaiting response from AP and FM committees.

Recommendation 39: ELAB believes the current EPA proficiency testing program for water is unacceptably limited. ELAB recommends that EPA act quickly to broaden the availability of proficiency testing samples for matrices other than water (e.g. solid waste, air, tissue, etc.)

Action: Recommendation remains open. Awaiting response from EMMC Policy Council.

Recommendation 40: ELAB recommends to NELAC that a) the NELAC standards become effective and enforceable one year after adoption, and b) that for the first group of laboratories to be accredited under NELAC standards, the 1999 standards be used for compliance and that the related timelines for acceptance of applications be adjusted accordingly.

Action: Recommendation remains open. Awaiting response from NELAC Board.

Recommendation 41: ELAB recommends that work should forge on for field measurement standards. It was agreed that field sampling should be approached to determine the needs of stakeholders for standard-setting. ELAB recommends that the Field Measurements ad hoc committee compile the variability associated with field sampling, collect field sampling protocols, review ISO guides for approaches, consult stakeholders, and re-visit the needs of EPA/OAR on the matter of field sampling.

Action: Recommendation remains open. Awaiting response from FM committee.